POLICY: Professional Behavior Guidelines for Special Education Field Placements REVISION DATE: November 2014, updated September 2022

Maintains records daily (pupil’s and cooperating/mentor teacher’s)
Students are expected to maintain up-to-date, organized, and legible records, and will complete all required record keeping before leaving the school site each scheduled day. Record keeping must be consistent with the cooperating/mentor teacher’s verbal or written direction. All records must contain a date and signature and/or name of the person producing the documentation. Students must avoid leaving records in open areas of the classroom or in locations unknown to the teacher. If applicable, communicate to the cooperating/mentor teacher the location of records before leaving.

Maintains confidentiality of information/records
Federal law requires educational agencies to guarantee each pupil basic privacy rights. To maintain these rights, agencies are required to have guidelines for collecting, maintaining, disseminating, and verifying the accuracy of information that they collect. As participants in public school programs, students are legally required to maintain the privacy rights of pupils they instruct as well as other pupils in the classroom.

As a general rule, discussions about pupils should concern only their educational goals and appropriate instructional strategies. In addition, any references to a pupil should not include his or her name in order to preserve confidentiality. Do not discuss any pupil’s disabilities, academic or behavior problems, or any other attributes with fellow students, friends, or family. Exceptions to this policy are limited to discussions about educational goals and appropriate instructional strategies with the university supervisor, university instructor, cooperating/mentor teacher, or practicum partner.

Should an occasion arise in which you are uncertain about the appropriateness of sharing or providing information, the final decision should be made by your cooperating/mentor teacher and university supervisor. If you have questions, ask your advisor for the “Utah Guidelines for Confidentiality and Disclosure of Student Records.”

Adapts to changes in classroom routine
Classroom routines change rapidly and sometimes abruptly. The student must be prepared to change procedures, alter schedules, and modify lesson plans. Make immediate alterations based on the cooperating/mentor teacher’s verbal or written direction. Ask questions of the cooperating/mentor teacher for clarification.

As a university student, you are expected to act and communicate as a professional. You are expected to be alert at all times. You are a guest in the school environment. It is unprofessional to make disparaging remarks about your cooperating/mentor teacher or his/her practices with fellow students, friends, faculty, or others.

It is unacceptable and potentially unlawful to be under the influence of any substance that impairs your ability to think, talk, move about, or remain awake at school. Language
interpreted by school personnel or university supervisors as vulgar, abusive, or offensive language is unacceptable.

**Dresses appropriately and maintains personal hygiene**
Students are expected to meet the standards of the school district, program or clinic in which the student is placed. Appropriate dress also requires wearing of a photo ID name tag unless the cooperating/mentor teacher requests it be removed in the classroom (if so, the ID must be worn in other school areas).

**Responds favorably to constructive feedback**
The university supervisor’s objective regarding the field experience is to provide the student with frequent learning opportunities so teaching skills significantly increase from beginning to end. To achieve this objective, the university supervisor, cooperating/mentor teacher, and other school personnel will provide performance feedback. Students are encouraged to ask questions for clarification. However, it is imperative the student accept feedback, acknowledge need for improvement, and immediately implement recommended changes.

**Implements changes after feedback is provided**
After receiving feedback, it is imperative the student implement changes as recommended. It is also important the student seek out the university supervisor, cooperating/mentor teacher, and other school personnel who initially provided the feedback to receive additional input on whether implementation is correct.

**Arrives on time each scheduled day**
Students are expected to be punctual and to attend every scheduled period. Absences are only acceptable for certain emergencies related to health, illness, or family, or for court appearance. Health impairment is a trauma requiring hospitalization, emergency attention from a physician, or emergency appointment with a physician. An illness is a debilitating health condition or communicable virus. A family emergency refers to death or hospitalization of an immediate family member. A court appearance is a court trial requiring testimony or jury duty. Excluded from the list of acceptable absences are minor health concerns, weddings or other events involving family members, health problems of family members, illness of a child (unless prior approval is provided by the cooperating/mentor teacher), attendance at court trials without subpoena, conflicts with work schedule, etc. If questions arise, contact your cooperating/mentor teacher PRIOR TO THE ABSENCE.

**COVID-19 Update:** Students who are feeling ill or who have been exposed to COVID-19 are asked to stay home. Any USU student or employee who is experiencing symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, has been exposed to someone who tested positive, or has been asked to quarantine by health officials should fill out the COVID-19 questionnaire. This notifies USU’s case containment team and, for students, begins the process of assisting with services and accommodations through the COVID Care Team.
At a minimum, maintain updated knowledge of and follow all school/district COVID protocols

State law prohibits state universities from requiring vaccines. However, USU strongly encourages everyone – including vaccinated individuals – to wear masks indoors. This is in accordance with recent CDC guidance for areas with a high rate of COVID-19 transmission, which includes most of Utah.

The university also strongly encourages everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine if they are able. USU will partner with local health departments to hold vaccination clinics in the first weeks of the semester. Vaccines are the best tool available to keep students learning and participating in campus activities instead of quarantining or isolating.

For up to date USU COVID-19 information, go to https://www.usu.edu/today/story/update-for-usu-community-on-coronavirus

Prior to an absence, students must contact both the cooperating/mentor teacher AND the university supervisor to request the absence, describe the reason for the absence, and indicate the scheduled return date. When possible, students should convey lesson plans, behavior intervention plans, or other preparations to the cooperating/mentor teacher prior to the absence (verbally or in written form). If applicable, students should contact their practicum partner to see if days can be switched to cover responsibilities on the day of absence. At minimum, students will need to make up unexcused or excessive excused absences.

A student is considered tardy if she/he is not present in the classroom or scheduled teaching location with the necessary teaching materials AT LEAST 5 MINUTES BEFORE INSTRUCTION BEGINS. For example, tardiness is defined as not present in the classroom with teaching materials at 10:25 for a 10:30 lesson.

Cooperating/mentor teachers must immediately report tardiness and unexcused absences to the university supervisor.

**Maintenance of Field Placements**

Placements in public schools are secured due to the willingness of cooperating/mentor teachers to allow students to instruct their pupils. Cooperating/mentor teachers must maintain their accountability for pupils’ well-being. Thus, if the cooperating/mentor teacher feels his/her pupils are benefiting, the student will remain in the placement. If the cooperating/mentor teacher feels it is not in his/her pupils’ best interest to continue work with the student, the placement may be terminated. If the cooperating/mentor teacher requests that a placement be terminated, a meeting between the cooperating/mentor teacher, university supervisor, and student will be held to discuss the problem. Following this meeting, the university supervisor and chairperson of the undergraduate committee will meet to evaluate the reason(s) for termination. Resulting actions may include (a) seeking a new placement, (b) withdrawing from the course, or (c) failing the course.

**Avoid Each of the Following Practices**
Do not:

1. Give any pupil medication, prescribed or over-the-counter, unless you have received authorized instruction by the school district and your name appears on the health care plan for the individual pupil.

2. Physically handle pupils unless you have been authorized by the teacher to do so and physical assistance is an approved level of assistance for an instructional or behavior management program. (Note: Written documentation must be provided for Levels II-IV behavior intervention according to USOE LRBI policy, as well as training for each teacher, student, or other adult using Levels II-IV procedures.) 8/30/04

3. Photograph, video-record, or tape-record pupils unless approval has been received by the cooperating/mentor teacher and the pupil’s parent/guardian. Post any comments, photos or videos (see #3 above) regarding your placement on any social media site.

4. Take pupils outside the school grounds with you unless you have been approved to do so by the cooperating/mentor teacher.

5. Take anyone with you i.e., children, your children, husband, friend, etc., without permission into school.

6. Offer to provide transportation for any pupil using your own vehicle.

7. Release any pupil to an adult claiming to be a parent, guardian, relative, or other responsible person (even if shown an identification) without first checking with the cooperating/mentor classroom teacher or the school office.

8. Assist any students with any toileting needs on your own, without a cooperating/mentor teacher, or other school personnel.